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ABSTRACT

This document lists and explains the Connecticut State Board of Education's standards of knowledge and skills for educated citizens and its policy on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are expected of Connecticut public secondary school graduates. The Common Core details what high school graduates ought to know and know how to do, described in clear and simple language. It represents a broad array of outcomes that should result from the entire K-12 school experience, including academic skills and knowledge, personal and social skills, attitudes, and attributes. The Common Core of Learning is organized under three major headings with subheadings that reflect significant groups of skills, knowledge, and attitudes. These headings are as follows: (1) attributes and attitudes (self-concept, motivation and persistence, responsibility and self-reliance, intellectual curiosity, interpersonal relations, sense of community, and moral and ethical values); (2) skills and competencies (reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing, quantitative skills, reasoning and problem solving, and learning skills); and (3) understandings and applications (the arts, careers and vocations, cultures and languages, history and social sciences, literature, mathematics, physical development and health, and science and technology). An epilogue provides suggestions for use of the Common Core. (KC)

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Connecticut's Common Core of Learning

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Connecticut's Common Core of Learning

Connecticut State Board of Education

January 1987

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that the Connecticut State Board of Education presents Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, adopted by the Board on January 7, 1987, "as its standard of an educated citizen and as its policy on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are expected of Connecticut's public secondary school graduates."

There is a continuous need in education to more specifically define what we expect of our students and our schools. Connecticut's Common Core does this. It should serve as a goal for all of us to strive for and a standard by which to assess our progress.

The recommendation to develop the Common Core came from two previous statewide committees. In 1984 and 1985, the Graduation Requirements Committee and the Superintendents Discussion Group on Equal Educational Opportunity both called for an articulation of the things we expect high school graduates to know and be able to do.

In March 1986, I appointed a distinguished group of Connecticut citizens to the Common Core of Learning Committee. This group researched previous national level "core" documents, visited schools to discuss the Common Core with teachers and administrators, consulted with a number of statewide organizations, sought responses to drafts of the Common Core, and conducted a public hearing on its content.

The thoughtful, thorough work of the committee--led by Dr. John T. Casteen III, president of the University of Connecticut, and Dr. Badi G. Foster, president of the Aetna Institute for Corporate Education--resulted in the Common Core of Learning we proudly offer in these pages. The Board and I extend our thanks to the committee members for their outstanding efforts.

Please read the Common Core of Learning with care. Compare it to what your schools are presently doing, and use it to address your district's needs for improving student learning--a goal we seek together.

Gerald N. Tirozzi
Commissioner of Education

TO THE READER

This document sets forth what we believe ought to be the outcomes of education in the public schools. Many graduates do not now command all of the Common Core. We believe that all or virtually all can if we make education itself more productive.

The Common Core details what school graduates ought to know and know how to do. The language is deliberately simple. We do not believe that good education ought to be mysterious. We do believe that clear (even ambitious) goals will benefit students, parents, teachers and board members. And we believe also that the Common Core serves both of our larger goals--quality and equality--in ways that are essential to the public interest in education.

John T. Casteen III
President
The University of Connecticut

Cochair
Common Core of Learning Committee

TO THE READER

Participation in the work of the Common Core of Learning Committee has been a source of both great personal reward and professional pride. I gained immeasurably from the insights and experiences so generously shared by my colleagues on the Committee. My high regard for local education leaders was confirmed by the quality of professional judgment the Committee received from schools and school districts across the State. Finally, my appreciation for processes which promote a free and open exchange of opinions on matters as important as education has surely deepened.

Clearly, everyone who contributed to the development of the Common Core of Learning should feel a sense of accomplishment. Yet by itself, this document will not affect the opportunities, experiences or achievement of a single Connecticut student. For this, we must look to you: our classroom teachers, principals, district staff, board members, parents and concerned citizens. Your leadership in bringing the Common Core of Learning to life is vital.

We hope this document will be used within your schools and communities to promote a new level of dialogue about education--about its purposes and effects.

With your leadership, the Common Core of Learning will help us all face the future with a sense of renewed confidence in what we *can* accomplish, and a renewed determination in what we *will* accomplish.

Badi G. Foster
President
Aetna Institute for Corporate Education

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Common Core of Learning Committee

CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING

PREAMBLE

In order to prepare future generations of capable and flexible people, we present Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. This represents a response to the complexity of today's rapidly changing world, a desire to shape the future, and a commitment to a better educated citizenry.

We believe there is a common set of skills, knowledge and attitudes essential to the total development of all Connecticut students. These learnings have intrinsic value, independent of a student's background, for the fulfillment of future aspirations. We further believe that these skills, knowledge and attitudes constitute a set of expectations that all students can achieve regardless of diverse learning rates and styles. Achievement of the Common Core will help students create and attain meaningful goals and engage in lifelong learning.

The Common Core establishes a vision of what Connecticut's high school graduates should know and be able to do. It represents a broad array of outcomes that should result from the entire K-12 school experience, including academic skills and knowledge, personal and social skills, attitudes and attributes. We believe the Common Core articulates Connecticut's expectations for its schools and its youth, thereby enhancing the quality and equality of educational opportunities throughout the state.

The Common Core of Learning represents preparation for life. It consists of abilities that are necessary not just for employment and further education, but also those that are essential to becoming a productive and contributing member of society. The Common Core is not meant to define minimum competencies; rather, it sets a standard for an educated citizen.

We believe the primary value of the Common Core of Learning is in its use by educators, parents and other citizens to improve instructional programs that will enable students to achieve these expectations. The Common Core should influence local and state goals of education, as well as affect program decisions and resource allocations in our schools. It should also be useful to institutions of higher education and employers in

establishing expectations and developing programs for Connecticut's high school graduates. Finally, for more accurate reporting of the condition of education and equality of opportunity within Connecticut, the Common Core should be considered in assessments of school curriculum and student achievement and should help identify needs for school program improvement and student learning.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning reflects a commitment to excellence in public elementary and secondary education and to high expectations of all our students. We believe the implementation of the Common Core will help develop young people who can think and act independently, and assist Connecticut's schools in approaching the twenty-first century with confidence and clear direction.

Illustration designed by
Jennifer C. Goldberg,
State Student Advisory Council

INTRODUCTION

The Common Core has been developed with an understanding that students begin their schooling at different levels of readiness and some have developmental handicaps as well. It is also acknowledged that students have different interests and aspirations. Recognizing these differences, however, does not justify the development of a different Common Core for each student. To the contrary, the goal of each student developing to his or her fullest potential argues for the creation of one Common Core that has the highest expectations for each child.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning is organized under three major headings with subheadings that reflect significant groups of skills, knowledge and attitudes:

Attributes and Attitudes

Self-Concept
Motivation and Persistence
Responsibility and Self-Reliance
Intellectual Curiosity
Interpersonal Relations
Sense of Community
Moral and Ethical values

Skills and Competencies

Reading
Writing
Speaking, Listening and Viewing
Quantitative Skills
Reasoning and Problem Solving
Learning Skills

Understandings and Applications

The Arts
Careers and Vocations
Cultures and Languages
History and Social Sciences
Literature
Mathematics
Physical Development and Health
Science and Technology

The order of the three major headings does not represent their relative importance. It does represent a logical sequence of assuring effective learning. While schools share the development of attitudes and attributes with the home and other institutions, it is acknowledged that students learn best when they are appropriately motivated and self-confident. Although by-products of effective instruction, these attitudes and attributes are also preconditions for mastering specific skills. Many of the skills and competencies, and the attitudes and attributes, while not taught directly or from a written curriculum, are continually developed during instruction in the traditional curriculum areas presented in the section on understandings and applications.

The Common Core of Learning should not be misconstrued as a set of isolated skills and understandings. To the contrary, it should be viewed as an integrated and interdependent set of learning outcomes. Users of the Common Core of Learning should continually look for cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches and for the transfer of skills and knowledge from one domain to another and one subject area to another. Many items listed under a particular subheading could easily have been included under others.

The Common Core is not a curriculum. Each school district's curriculum will be more comprehensive and significantly more specific, including a wide range of learning experiences and instructional strategies. The Common Core is a statement of the student outcomes expected to result from the entire K-12 school experience. It has been developed to influence curriculum by generating discussion and stimulating change in school programs, student objectives, resource allocations and teaching.

Finally, the Common Core of Learning has been developed neither as a state mandate nor as a condition for graduation. It provides a statement of high expectations needed for all Connecticut students to become educated citizens. It is also offered as a catalyst for school improvement. The framers of this document view it as a beginning, one that will change in response to new demands and challenges.

THE COMMON CORE

ATTRIBUTES AND ATTITUDES

A positive self-image and self-esteem are crucial to learning. These attributes determine goals, behaviors and responses to others. Furthermore, people depend on and influence one another. Therefore, it is important that students take responsibility for their lives and set appropriate goals for themselves. In doing so, they develop lifelong attitudes.

The family and societal forces other than schools play major roles in fostering student growth, and schools can provide a supportive climate for that growth. While it is inappropriate for schools to accept the sole or even primary responsibility for developing these attributes and attitudes, it is also inappropriate to deny the critical importance of these factors as preconditions to learning, as consequences of the teaching of all disciplines, and as desired outcomes for all students.

POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- appreciate his/her worth as a unique and capable individual and exhibit self-esteem;
- develop a sense of personal effectiveness and a belief in his/her ability to shape his/her future;
- develop an understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses and the ability to maximize strengths and rectify or compensate for weaknesses.

MOTIVATION AND PERSISTENCE

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- experience the pride of accomplishment that results from hard work and persistence;
- act through a desire to succeed rather than a fear of failure, while recognizing that failure is a part of everyone's experience;
- strive toward and take the risks necessary for accomplishing tasks and fulfilling personal ambitions.

RESPONSIBILITY AND SELF-RELIANCE

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- assume the primary responsibility for identifying his/her needs and setting reasonable goals;
- initiate actions and assume responsibility for the consequences of those actions;
- demonstrate dependability;
- demonstrate self-control.

INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- demonstrate a questioning attitude, open-mindedness and curiosity;
- demonstrate independence of thought necessary for leadership and creativity;
- pursue lifelong learning.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- develop productive and satisfying relationships with others based upon mutual respect;
- develop a sensitivity to and an understanding of the needs, opinions, concerns and customs of others;
- participate actively in reaching group decisions;
- appreciate the roles and responsibilities of parents, children and families.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- develop a sense of belonging to a group larger than friends, family and coworkers;
- develop an understanding of the importance of each individual to the improvement of the quality of life for all in the community;
- examine and assess the values, standards and traditions of the community;
- understand and appreciate his/her own historical and ethnic heritage as well as that of others represented within the larger community.

MORAL AND ETHICAL VALUES

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize the necessity for moral and ethical conduct in a society;
- recognize that values affect choices and conflicts;
- develop personal criteria for making informed moral judgments and ethical decisions.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

All educated citizens must possess a core of basic or enabling skills and competencies that provide the critical intellectual foundations for broader acquisition of knowledge. These enabling skills, applied in diverse ways, form the heart of an academic experience as each contributes to the development of understanding within and among disciplines.

READING

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas, details and facts in written work and summarize the ideas in his/her own words;
- identify, comprehend and infer comparisons, contrasts, sequences and conclusions in written work;
- recognize different purposes and methods of writing, identify a writer's point of view and tone, and interpret a writer's meaning inferentially as well as literally;
- set purposes, ask questions and make predictions prior to and during reading and draw conclusions from reading;
- make critical judgments about written work including separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistency and judging the validity of evidence and sufficiency of support;
- vary his/her reading speed and method based on the type of material and the purpose for reading;
- use the features of books and other reference materials, such as table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and subtitles, index, glossary, appendix and bibliography.

WRITING

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- write standard English sentences with correct sentence structure, verb forms, punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plural forms, word choice and spelling;
- select, organize and relate ideas and develop them in coherent paragraphs;
- organize sentences and paragraphs into a variety of forms and produce writing of an appropriate length using a variety of composition types;
- use varying language, information, style and format appropriate to the purpose and the selected audience;
- conceive ideas and select and use detailed examples, illustrations, evidence and logic to develop the topic;
- gather information from primary and secondary sources; write a report using that information; quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately; and cite sources properly;
- improve his or her own writing by restructuring, correcting errors and rewriting.

SPEAKING, LISTENING AND VIEWING

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- engage critically and constructively in an oral exchange of ideas;
- ask and answer questions correctly and concisely;
- understand spoken instructions and give spoken instructions to others;
- distinguish relevant from irrelevant information and the intent from the details of an oral message;
- identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in speeches, discussions, audio and video presentations, and report accurately what has been presented;
- comprehend verbal and nonverbal presentations at the literal, inferential and evaluative levels;
- deliver oral presentations using a coherent sequence of thought, clarity of presentation, suitable vocabulary and length, and nonverbal communication appropriate for the purpose and audience.

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- add, subtract, multiply and divide using whole numbers, decimals, fractions and integers;
- make and use measurements in both traditional and metric units to measure lengths, areas, volumes, weights, temperatures and times;
- use ratios, proportions and percents, powers and roots;
- understand spatial relationships and the basic concepts of geometry;
- make estimates and approximations, and judge the reasonableness of results;
- understand the basic concepts of probability and statistics;
- organize data into tables, charts and graphs, and read and interpret data presented in these forms;
- formulate and solve problems in mathematical terms.

REASONING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

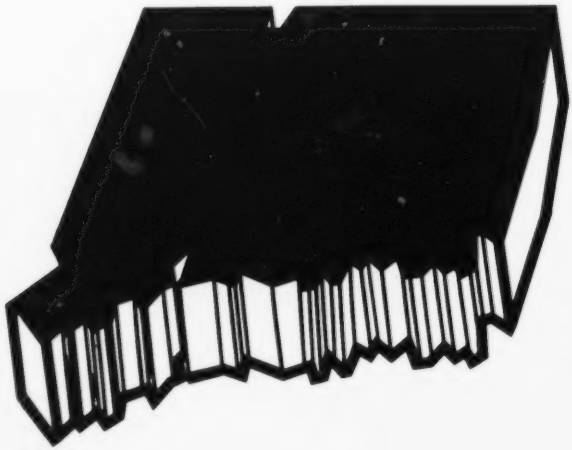
As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, recognize fallacies and examine arguments from various points of view;
- draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, and defend his/her conclusions rationally;
- formulate and test predictions and hypotheses based on appropriate data;
- comprehend, develop and use concepts and generalizations;
- identify cause and effect relationships;
- identify and formulate problems;
- gather, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information pertinent to the problem;
- develop alternative solutions to problems, weigh relative risks and benefits, make logical decisions and verify results;
- use critical and creative thinking skills to respond to unanticipated situations and recurring problems.

LEARNING SKILLS

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- set learning goals and priorities consistent with stated objectives and progress made, and allocate the time necessary to achieve them;
- determine what is needed to accomplish a task and establish habits conducive to learning independently or with others;
- follow a schedule that accounts for both short and long term project accomplishment;
- locate and use a variety of sources of information including print and nonprint materials, computers and other technologies, interviews and direct observations;
- read or listen to specific information and take effective and efficient notes.



UNDERSTANDINGS AND APPLICATIONS

Skills and competencies cannot be ends in themselves. Unless students have the knowledge and experiences needed to apply those learnings and develop a fuller understanding of life, their education will be incomplete. Schools must therefore accept responsibility for leading students through a body of knowledge and its application. This is what comprises the major content of the curriculum.

These understandings and applications have been grouped here under the usual disciplines, but it is important to recognize the inter-relationship among the disciplines and to promote students' ability to transfer knowledge and applications across subject areas.

THE ARTS: CREATIVE AND PERFORMING

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- express his/her own concepts, ideas and emotions through one or more of the arts (art, music, drama and dance);
- appreciate the importance of the arts in expressing and illuminating human experiences;
- understand that personal beliefs and societal values influence art forms and styles;
- identify the materials, processes and tools used in the production, exhibition and public performance of works of art, music, drama and dance;
- use and understand language appropriate to each art form when discussing, critiquing and interpreting works in the visual and performing arts;
- identify significant works and recognize the aesthetic qualities of art, music, drama and dance from different historical periods and cultures.

CAREERS AND VOCATIONS

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- demonstrate positive attitudes toward work, including acceptance of the necessity of making a living and an appreciation of the social value and dignity of work;
- demonstrate attitudes and habits (such as pride in good workmanship, dependability and regular attendance) and the employability skills and specialized knowledge that will make the individual a productive participant in economic life and a contributor to society;
- consider the range of occupations that will be personally satisfying and suitable to his/her skills, interests and aptitudes;
- identify, continue or pursue the education and training necessary for his/her chosen career/vocation;
- understand personal economics and its relationship to skills required for employment, promotion and financial independence;
- exhibit the interpersonal skills necessary for success in the workplace (such as working harmoniously as part of a team, and giving and taking direction).

CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize characteristics common to all people, such as physical attributes, emotional responses, attitudes, abilities and aspirations;
- respect differences among people and recognize the pluralistic nature of United States society;
- demonstrate an understanding of other cultures and their roles in international affairs;
- analyze the structure of spoken and written language;
- recognize the commonalities and the differences that exist in the structure of languages;
- understand and communicate in at least one language in addition to English.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize and analyze events, personalities, trends and beliefs that have shaped the history and culture of Connecticut, the United States and the world;
- demonstrate a knowledge of United States history and government and understand the duties, responsibilities and rights of United States citizenship;
- understand the basic concepts of economics;
- analyze and compare the political and economic beliefs and systems of the United States with those of other nations;
- apply major concepts drawn from the disciplines of history and the social sciences--anthropology, economics, geography, law and government, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology--to hypothetical and real situations;
- demonstrate basic knowledge of world geography;
- apply critical thinking skills and knowledge from history and the social sciences to the decision-making process and the analysis of controversial issues in order to understand the present and anticipate the future;
- understand the roles played by various racial, ethnic and religious groups in developing the nation's pluralistic society;
- appreciate the mutual dependence of all people in the world and understand that our lives are part of a global community joined by economic, social, cultural and civic concerns.

LITERATURE

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand that literature reflects and illuminates human experiences, motives, conflicts and values;
- understand the essential elements of poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction;
- understand and appreciate selected literary masterpieces, both past and present, that manifest different value systems and philosophies;
- recognize symbolism, allegory and myth;
- identify literary themes and their implications;
- evaluate selected literary works and support each evaluation;
- enjoy reading as a lifelong pursuit.

MATHEMATICS

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand that mathematics is a means of expressing quantifiable ideas;
- apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve a broad array of quantitative, spatial and analytical problems;
- use mathematical skills and techniques to complete consumer and job-related tasks;
- select and use appropriate approaches and tools for solving problems, including mental computation, trial and error, paper and pencil, calculator and computer;
- use mathematical operations in describing and analyzing physical and social phenomena;
- demonstrate a quantitative sense by using numbers for counting, measuring, comparing, ordering, scaling, locating and coding;
- apply basic algebraic and geometric concepts to representing, analyzing and solving problems;
- use basic statistical concepts to draw conclusions from data.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

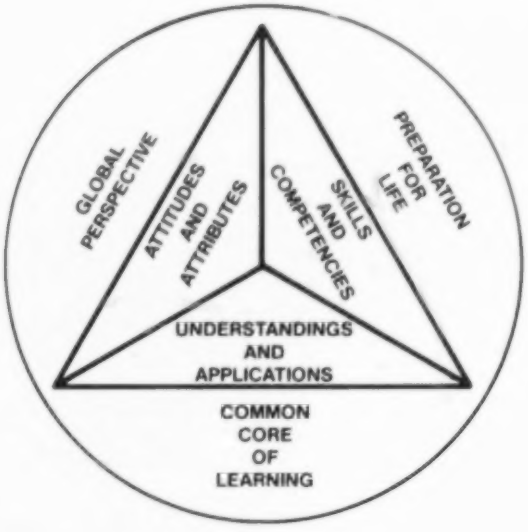
As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand human growth and development, the functions of the body, human sexuality and the lifelong value of physical fitness;
- plan and implement a physical fitness program with a variety of conditioning exercises and/or leisure activities;
- understand the basic scientific principles which apply to human movement and physical activities;
- understand the role physical activities play in psychological and social development;
- understand and apply the basic elements of proper nutrition, avoidance of substance abuse, prevention and treatment of illness, and management of emotional stress;
- recognize the need for a safe and healthy environment, practice proper safety skills, and demonstrate a variety of basic life saving skills.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand and apply the basic principles, concepts and language of biology, chemistry, physics, earth and space science;
- understand the implications of limited natural resources, the study of ecology and the need for conservation;
- identify and design techniques for recognizing and solving problems in science, including the development of hypotheses and the design of experiments to test them--the gathering of data, presenting them in appropriate formats, and drawing inferences based upon the results;
- use observation and analysis of similarities and differences in the study of natural phenomena;
- demonstrate the ability to work with laboratory measuring, manipulating and sensing devices;
- understand the implications of existing and emerging technologies on our society and our quality of life, including personal, academic and work environments;
- recognize the potential and the limitations of science and technology in solving societal problems.



EPILOGUE

While Connecticut is justifiably proud of its public elementary and secondary schools, it cannot rest on its laurels. Regular improvement, ever higher expectations and a continuous striving for excellence and equity are the keys to Connecticut's schools maintaining their pre-eminent status.

The expectation that each student can and should achieve the Common Core of Learning and be considered an educated citizen will require schools to change and greater resources to be dedicated to our public schools. This change emerges only when all of society shares a vision of what ought to be and expresses a sense of urgency for the need to act.

The Common Core offers such a vision of better schooling. For this vision to become a reality, many different groups should take action. Educators, parents, other citizens, community organizations, employers and others should use the Common Core of Learning (CCL) in a variety of ways.

For example:

1. Local boards of education should compare their existing goals and program priorities to the CCL to help identify desired changes.

2. Teachers and school administrators should examine their existing instructional and professional development programs in relation to the CCL in order to develop program modifications.

3. Local school districts and the State Department of Education, working together, should develop a variety of model strategies for implementing and achieving the CCL.

4. The State Board of Education should examine the CCL, adopt it as state policy and then analyze existing state programs and services in order to identify needed improvements.

5. The State Department of Education should examine the CCL and identify strategies for integrating and utilizing it with existing efforts such as: the Comprehensive Plan for Elementary and Secondary, Vocational, Career and Adult Education; the Guides to Curriculum Development; Competency-Based Adult Education Programs; the Regional Vocational Technical Schools; the Institute for Teaching and Learning.

6. The State Department of Education should, with the assistance of local school district personnel, design a means for periodically assessing the statewide level of student achievement of the Common Core, using a random and stratified sample of students. This would be done as part of the Connecticut Assessment of Educational Progress to better assess and report on the condition of education and equality of opportunities in Connecticut.

7. The State Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education should examine the CCL for its implications for the preparation of teachers, including the establishment of collaborative model training programs using the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program and the Standards and Procedures for Teacher Preparation Program.

8. Connecticut's institutions of higher education should examine the CCL and evaluate their existing expectations of and programs for Connecticut's high school graduates.

9. Connecticut employers and labor organizations should examine the CCL and evaluate their existing expectations of and programs for Connecticut's high school graduates.

10. Students, parents and other community members should examine the CCL, consider their roles in its implementation, and assist their schools where appropriate.

11. State and local government officials should examine the CCL and consider developing consistent and supportive public policy, including financial and other resources, to achieve the expectations set forth.

12. Annually, the Commissioner of Education should report to the State Board of Education on the utilization of the CCL. In January, 1990, the Commissioner should convene a statewide committee to receive a three-year summary report on implementation of the CCL and to review the CCL for possible revision.

REFERENCES

Many of the individual items in Connecticut's Common Core of Learning have been taken in whole or in part or have been adapted from the major reference works identified below. Sincere appreciation is extended to each of the organizations and authors responsible for these high quality prior efforts, without which Connecticut's task would have been much more difficult.

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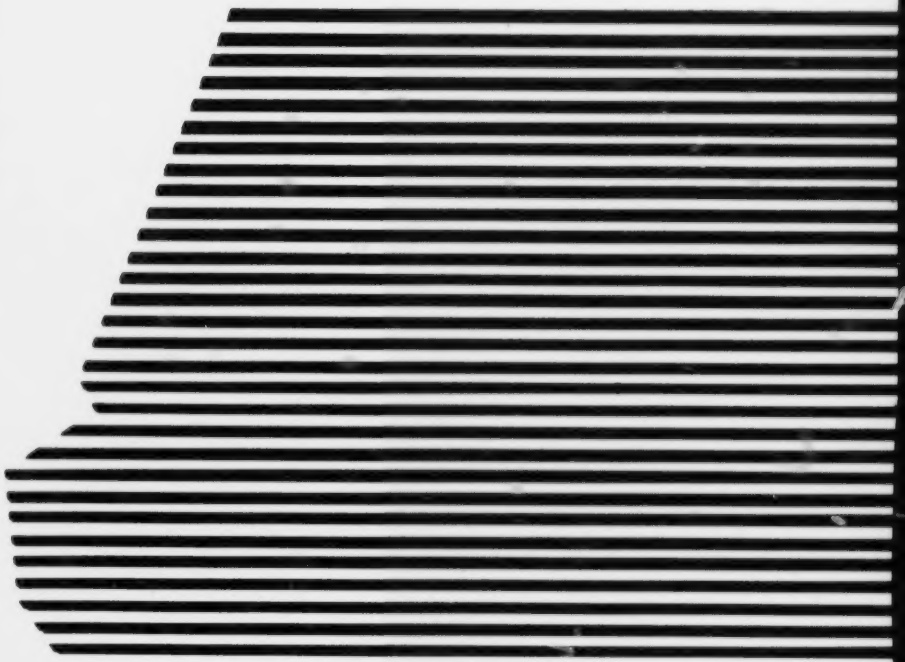
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